

from CIA newspaper, 8 Sep

MEXICO : PRISONER EXCHANGE PROPOSAL.

(U) MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOREIGNERS TO SERVE JAIL TERMS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES IS DESIGNED IN PART TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE US TO SPEED NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PRISONER EXCHANGE.

~~(S)~~ //THE MEXICANS FIRST PROPOSED SUCH AN EXCHANGE TO US OFFICIALS SOME MONTHS AGO, AND IT HAS BEEN RUMORED AMONG US PRISONERS IN MEXICO FOR SOME TIME. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGISLATION WAS DOUBTLESS HASTENED BY A HUNGER STRIKE BY US PRISONERS THAT BEGAN YESTERDAY.//

~~(S)~~ //SLIGHTLY OVER 600 US CITIZENS ARE IN MEXICAN JAILS, MOST OF THEM CHARGED WITH DRUG USE OR TRAFFICKING. THE PRISONERS CALLED THE HUNGER STRIKE TO PROTEST WHAT THEY FELT WAS A RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF BOTH COUNTRIES TO NEGOTIATE AN EXCHANGE AGREEMENT AND TO PROTEST PRISON CONDITIONS AND MISTREATMENT BY MEXICAN PRISON AUTHORITIES AND POLICE.//

~~(S)~~ //THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE MEXICAN CONGRESS ON MONDAY, WOULD GIVE THE PRESIDENT THE POWER TO SIGN TREATIES WITH OTHER NATIONS TO ALLOW A TRANSFER OF SANCTIONS UNDER WHICH PRISONER EXCHANGES COULD BE CARRIED OUT. ALTHOUGH THE LEGISLATION IS CERTAIN TO BE PASSED BY THE CONGRESS, THE MEXICANS ARE NO DOUBT AWARE THAT MAJOR CHANGES IN US LAW WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE THE MEXICAN INITIATIVE COULD BE ACCEPTED.// (CONFIDENTIAL - NO FORN)

